

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A sliding element for seals ~~mainly~~ comprising a fired preformed material including 25 to 75 weight % carbonaceous impalpable powdery aggregate of non-graphitizing carbon and/or graphitizing carbon and 20 to 50 weight % synthetic resin as a binder, wherein carbonaceous carbon fibers ~~without~~ free of surface treatment are blended within the range of 5 to 25 weight % and inside a carbon matrix, said carbon fibers are randomly scattered.
2. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 1, wherein said carbon fibers are 5 to 30 μm in diameter and 50 to 300 μm in length, ~~source materials thereof are polyacrylonitrile or pitch series, maximum temperature of heat treatment is 1500° C or less and Vickers hardness is 200 or more.~~
3. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 1, wherein a Vickers hardness of said carbonaceous impalpable powdery aggregate of non-graphitizing carbon and/or graphitizing carbon is 80 or more.
4. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 1, wherein said synthetic resin resins as said binder ~~are~~ includes at least one of phenolic resin, epoxy resin, furan resin, polyester resin, ~~or~~ and naphthalene resin.
5. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 2, wherein said synthetic resin resins as said binder ~~are~~ includes at least one of phenolic resin, epoxy resin, furan resin, polyester resin, ~~or~~ and naphthalene resin.

6. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 3, wherein said synthetic resin resins as said binder ~~are~~ includes at least one of phenolic resin, epoxy resin, furan resin, polyester resin, ~~or~~ and naphthalene resin.

7. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 2, wherein the sliding element for seals is used as one of a mechanical seal for a water pump, a mechanical seal for a compressor of a car air conditioner, a mechanical seal for a pump of industrial use ~~or~~ and a mechanical seal for a pump of all purposes.

8. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 3, wherein the sliding element for seals is used as one of a mechanical seal for a water pump, a mechanical seal for a compressor of a car air conditioner, a mechanical seal for a pump of industrial use ~~or~~ and a mechanical seal for a pump of all purposes.

9. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 4, wherein the sliding element for seals is used as one of a mechanical seal for a water pump, a mechanical seal for a compressor of a car air conditioner, a mechanical seal for a pump of industrial use ~~or~~ and a mechanical seal for a pump of all purposes.

10. **(Currently Amended)** A seal assembly comprising a sliding element ~~as in~~ according to claim 1 and a mating sliding element comprised of a ~~harder~~ material having a Vickers hardness greater than that of the sliding element of claim 1.

11. **(Currently Amended)** The seal assembly ~~as in~~ according to claim 10, wherein the mating sliding element is comprised of silicon carbide.

12. (Currently Amended) A process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals, comprising the steps of:

blending a source material ~~mainly~~ comprising 25 to 75 weight % carbonaceous impalpable powdery aggregate of non-graphitizing carbon and/or graphitizing carbon and 20 to 50 weight % synthetic resin as a binder with 5 to 25 weight % carbonaceous carbon fibers ~~without~~ free of surface treatment; and

mixing, kneading and molding the blended material to a perform; and ~~then~~ firing the preform at a predetermined temperature.

13. (Currently Amended) The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 12, wherein said carbon fibers are 5 to 30 μm in diameter and 50 to 300 μm in length; ~~source materials thereof are polyacrylonitrile or pitch series, maximum temperature of heat treatment is 1500° C or less and Vickers hardness is 200 or more.~~

14. (Currently Amended) The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 12, wherein said synthetic resin ~~resins~~ as said binder are includes at least one of phenolic resin, epoxy resin, furan resin, polyester resin, ~~or~~ and naphthalene resin, and wherein a firing temperature for said firing is 800 to 1500°C.

15. (Currently Amended) The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals ~~as in~~ according to claim 13, wherein said synthetic resin ~~resins~~ as said binder are includes at least one of phenolic resin, epoxy resin, furan resin, polyester resin, ~~or~~ and naphthalene resin, and wherein a firing temperature for said firing is 800 to 1500°C.

16. **(New)** The sliding element for seals according to claim 1, wherein said carbon fibers are manufactured from one of polyacrylonitrile series carbon fibers and pitch series carbon fibers.

17. **(New)** The sliding element for seals according to claim 1, wherein said carbon fibers withstand a maximum heat treatment temperature of 1500°C.

18. **(New)** The sliding element for seals according to claim 1, wherein said carbon fibers have a Vickers hardness of 200 or more.

19. **(New)** The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals according to claim 12, wherein said carbon fibers are manufactured from one of polyacrylonitrile series carbon fibers and pitch series carbon fibers.

20. **(New)** The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals according to claim 12, wherein said carbon fibers withstand a maximum heat treatment temperature of 1500°C.

21. **(New)** The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals according to claim 12, wherein said carbon fibers have a Vickers hardness of 200 or more.